IN THE CLAIMS

1-23.(canceled)

24.(previously presented) A cylinder head gasket with a gasket plate being at least substantially metallic, said gasket plate comprising at least one sheet metal layer and having several combustion chamber openings, each of said combustion chamber openings being surrounded by at least one first bead formed in a sheet metal layer of said gasket plate and having a spring rate so as to be elastically deformable in height, wherein for delimiting the elastic deformation of said first bead at least one delimiting device is associated with each of said first beads, said delimiting device being close to the respective first bead, surrounding the respective combustion chamber opening and being obtained by deformation of a sheet metal layer of said gasket plate such that

(a) said delimiting device is formed by at least one second bead of said deformed sheet metal layer, said second bead having a spring rate and, in a plan view of said deformed sheet metal layer, surrounding the associated combustion chamber opening substantially completely and forming over at least part of the length of said second bead a substantially complete meander extending in a circumferential direction of said combustion chamber opening;

(b) all around the respective combustion chamber opening the spring rate of the second bead is greater than the spring rate of the associated first bead when measured perpendicularly to said gasket plate;

(c) in plan view of said gasket plate, the second bead is disposed between the associated combustion chamber opening and the associated first bead;

(d) the height of the second bead is selected so as to allow an elastic deformation of the associated first bead; and

(e) in a plan view of the deformed sheet metal layer the total area occupied by the second bead is at least equal to half of the total area occupied by said delimiting device.

25.(canceled)

26.(previously presented) The cylinder head gasket of claim 24 wherein the second bead is obtained by such a deformation of said deformed sheet metal layer that a thickness of material of a portion of said layer forming the second bead is substantially the same as a thickness of material of the deformed layer adjacent said second bead.

27.(previously presented) The cylinder head gasket of claim 24 wherein the height of the second bead is selected such that when the gasket is tightened, the first bead is initially compressed without compression of the second bead.